

Avoid Foodborne Illness

Fight BAC!™

The US food supply is among the safest in the world, but organisms that you can't see, smell, or taste—bacteria, viruses and tiny parasites—are everywhere in the environment.

These microorganisms—called pathogens—can invade food and cause illness, sometimes severe and even life-threatening illness, especially in young children, older adults, and persons with weakened immune systems. In pregnant women, foodborne illness can endanger their unborn babies.

The most common symptoms of foodborne illness are diarrhea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, head- or muscle-aches, and fever. Symptoms usually appear 12 to 72 hours after eating contaminated food but may occur between 30 minutes and 4 weeks later. Most people recover within 4 to 7 days without needing antibiotic treatment.

If symptoms are severe or the ill person is very young, very old, pregnant, or already ill, call your doctor immediately.

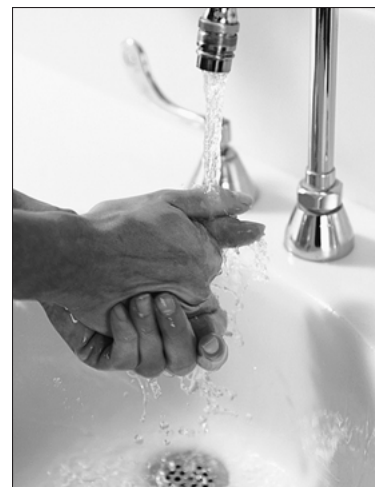
**Everyone should follow these
four simple steps to food safety**



1. Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.

Bacteria, viruses, and parasites can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and countertops. Here's how to **Fight BAC!™**:

- Wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- Important: Rinse raw produce in water. Don't use soap or detergents. If necessary, use a small vegetable brush to remove surface dirt.



Who is at risk

If you are among those at high risk, you need to be aware of and follow the most current information on food safety. Young children, pregnant women, older adults, and persons with weakened immune systems are at a higher risk for foodborne illness. Immune systems may be weakened by medical treatments, such as steroids or chemotherapy, or by conditions, such as AIDS, cancer, or diabetes. You are also at increased risk if you suffer from liver disease or alcoholism or if you have decreased stomach acidity (due to gastric surgery or the regular use of antacids).

If you are at risk

If you face a higher risk of foodborne illness, you are advised not to eat:

- Raw fish or shellfish, including oysters, clams, mussels, and scallops
- Raw or unpasteurized milk or cheeses
- Soft cheeses, such as feta, Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, and Mexican-style cheese (Hard cheeses, processed cheeses, cream cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt need not be avoided)
- Raw or undercooked eggs or foods containing raw or lightly cooked eggs, including certain salad dressings, cookie and cake batters, sauces, and beverages such as unpasteurized egg nog (Foods made from commercially pasteurized eggs are safe to eat)
- Raw or undercooked meat or poultry
- Raw sprouts (Alfalfa, clover, and radish)
- Unpasteurized fruit or vegetable juices (These juices will carry a warning label)

It is also important to reheat some foods that are bought pre-cooked, because they can become contaminated with pathogens after they have been processed and packaged. These foods include: hot dogs, luncheon meats (cold cuts), fermented and dry sausage, and other deli-style meat and poultry products. New information on food safety is constantly emerging. Recommendations and precautions for people at high risk are updated as scientists learn more about preventing foodborne illness.



2. Separate: Don't cross-contaminate.

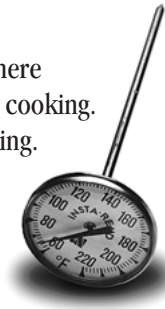
Cross-contamination is the word for how bacteria, viruses, and parasites can be spread from one food product to another. This is especially true when handling raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs, so keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Here's how to **Fight BAC!**™:

- Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator.
- If possible, use a different cutting board for raw meat, poultry and seafood products.
- Always wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- Use separate plates for cooked food and raw foods.

3. Cook: Cook to proper temperatures.

Food safety experts agree that foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful pathogens that cause foodborne illness. The best way to **Fight BAC!**™ is to:

- Use a clean thermometer that measures the internal temperature of cooked food to make sure meat, poultry, and casseroles are cooked to the temperatures in the chart at right.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. If you use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked, use pasteurized eggs.
- Fish should be opaque and flake easily with a fork.
- When cooking in a microwave oven, make sure there are no cold spots where pathogens can survive. For best results, cover food, stir, and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating. Heat other leftovers thoroughly to at least 165°F.



4. Chill: Refrigerate promptly.

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep harmful pathogens from growing and multiplying. So, set your refrigerator no higher than 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Check these temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Then, **Fight BAC!**™ by following these steps:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours or sooner.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- Don't pack the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe.



Learn more about **Fight BAC!**™ at: www.fightbac.org

For more information:

US Department of Agriculture, Meat and Poultry Hotline – 800 535-4555, TTY: 800 256-7076

US Food and Drug Administration, Food Information Hotline – 888 SAFEFOOD

www.foodsafety.gov

Safe cooking temperatures

Raw food	Internal temperature
Ground products	
Hamburger	160°F
Beef, veal, lamb, pork	160°F
Beef, veal, lamb	
Roasts & steaks	
medium-rare	145°F
medium	160°F
well-done	170°F
Pork	
Chops, roasts, ribs	
medium	160°F
well-done	170°F
Ham, fresh	160°F
Sausage, fresh	160°F
Poultry	
Chicken, whole & pieces	180°F
Duck	180°F
Turkey (unstuffed)	180°F
Whole	180°F
Breast	170°F
Dark meat	180°F
Stuffing (cooked separately)	165°F
Eggs	
Fried, poached	Yolk & white are firm
Casseroles	160°F
Sauces, custards	160°F
Seafood	
Fin Fish	Flesh opaque & flakes easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Shells red and flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells are open